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Secretary of Transportation to Visit Oklahoma

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters will visit Oklahoma City and Tulsa this month at the invitation of Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK), the chairman of the House Transportation and Treasury Appropriations subcommittee.

The two top federal transportation officials will tour I-44 in Tulsa and the I-40 Crosstown Expressway in Oklahoma City, and visit with transportation groups, government officials, and business leaders during their May 27th visit.

“Oklahoma has critical transportation needs because we’re in the heart of America,” said Istook. **“The condition of our roads impacts the whole country’s transportation. I’m working to improve our roads, and it’s a great help to have America’s top two highway officials come to Oklahoma.”**

The tour will begin in Tulsa where Istook and Congressman John Sullivan (R-OK) will show Mineta and Peters the interstate road and traffic conditions on Interstate 44, I-244 and the Will Rogers Turnpike. Afterwards, they will attend roundtable discussions with Oklahomans to discuss highway, air, transit, rail, and other transportation issues. In the afternoon, Istook will escort Mineta and Peters to Oklahoma City to view Interstate 40 and the Crosstown Expressway.

“We are extremely excited,” said Gary Ridley, director of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. **“Congressman Istook has worked very hard to bring these top US officials to Oklahoma to see first-hand some of state's critical project needs. Not only has Congressman Istook been very helpful to Oklahoma in his new leadership role, his long-lasting support of the I-40 Crosstown project has been instrumental in helping ODOT pursue this vital work for the past several years.”**

Replacing the Crosstown Expressway will be the most expensive transportation project in the state’s history. The current cost estimate is \$350 million. Over \$100 million was secured by the Oklahoma Congressional delegation in previous years. Istook says that securing the remaining \$250 million is among his top priorities.

“If I-40 isn’t fixed, it cripples local, state and national transportation,” said Istook. **“We can’t be distracted from focusing on it, because it’s our most important transportation project.”**